DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 431 EA 003 808

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TITLE Management Through Administrative Differentiation: "An Operational Strategy Utilizing Environmental Inputs for Viable Action Outputs.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 10p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Principles; *Administrator Role; Decision Making; Differentiated Staffs; *Input Output Analysis; Management; *Management Systems; *Problem Solving; Systems Approach

ABSTRACT

Most educational management systems currently define organizational roles in terms of the operations to be performed. A more efficient manner of organization might be one that operates in terms of objectives to be reached. One way of implementing such a problem solving structure, would be to assign a particular problem to administrative personnel in lieu of assigning a problem to a particular administrator. (RA)

ED057431

MANAGEMENT THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFERENTIATION

"An Operational Strategy Utilizing Environmental Inputs for Viable Action Outputs"

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by

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Staff differentiation has evolved in response to the need for greater efficacy in the accomplishments of increasingly complex tasks and a growing degree of proficiency required at every stage of progress. Unlike the bureaucractic expansion of structures which tend to constrain and narrow decision-making to higher levels of organization, staff differentiation assumes there are positive relationships between relevant involvement in decision-making and productivity. As such, differentiation has to be hailed as one of the principal hallmarks of modernization. However, if educational organizations are created to catalyze and facilitate specific inputs into desired or desirable outputs, then there exists an even greater need for "administrative differentiation."

Establishing objectives, assigning roles, and the enforcement of policy are the primary functions of the administrator. In order that the performance process of the organization can be planned, developed, managed and effected, the organization defines and assigns roles for people to carry out the organizational purpose. It is at this junction that we must come to grips with a phenomenon that

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EA 003 808

invariably exists but has not as yet been acknowledged--that is that there exist in any organization administrative goals that transcend--and because they do, no one will accept responsibility for them. Hence they are verbalized in meeting after meeting with no possible attempt at solution. In essence, because of this role transcension, these problems enter into a limbo of buck-passing. Whether this is the result of administators simply becoming inured to the delays and difficulties that characterize progress or whether bureaucratization has served as an effective administrative out to decision-making which makes it virtually impossible to visibly progress in the existing structure, the plain and simple fact remains that <u>if we are to achieve our system objectives, entity responsibility for performance must be demanded</u>. Further, if our present operational administrative process does not produce decisions in terms of effective, feasible, and acceptable educational outcomes, then its continuance can hardly be justified.

The following, then, is a system approach to management which presents both a framework and a methodology whereby new energy inputs from the environment provide effective outputs. The organization, therefore, becomes an open system that engages in constant transaction with its environment. As such, "decision elements" must be established so that performance requirements could be specified and/or reconciled.

Presently, the system operates on the premise that district roles function in terms of operations to be performed. Would it not be functionally more efficient to operate in terms of sub-objectives to be reached? The management system proposed serves

as a task-oriented approach to the treatment of problems as they arise and functions as a data-based working model to provide a behavioral strategy for operationalizing problem solving. This management system assumes the following:

1. Problems exist which transcend individual roles, i.e.,
   a. Extending the expertise of principals horizontally across the district.
   b. Developing a plan for educational specifications and their implementation.
   c. Synthesizing current district efforts toward excellence into identifiable long and short-term goals.

   These problems serve not only as individual roadblocks to progress, but as viable constraints on the entire organization.
2. Although additional personnel may provide some reduction in specific problems, the very nature of assigning roles precludes the solving of any district-wide problems.
3. A need exists for a new management structure, consisting largely of subcommittees which would be conceived not in terms of specific role operations to be performed but in terms of sub-goals to be reached.
4. Such a force already exists in the environment, and if given the opportunity to provide new energy the benefits of such a management system are so vast that they cannot be ignored. These include:
   a. Problem solving by a cadre of hierarchial expertise.

b. A marriage of district principals and central office personnel united toward a district-wide problem solving effort.

c. Administrative differentiation on the basis of sub-goals to be achieved rather than the basis of merely operations to be performed, i.e., role delineation.

Operationalizing the System. . . .

Problem Delineation

Within the educational environment there exists a cadre of resource personnel virtually untapped--the district principal. The plan would call for the establishment of subcommittees (not more than three per committee), assigned to a sub-goal. The subcommittees would have decision-making power on a broad-based scale. As such, they would act within defined parameters as a decentralized authority, adding new dimensions to the Superintendent's Office. Once problems are enumerated, performance requirements could be established, matching problem with corresponding expertise.

Problem Assessment

The first place to begin promoting accountability is at the top of the school hierarchy. Each subcommittee would assess an identifed problem in terms of its operational context, review past actions, identify constraints and variables and, finally, propose alternative strategies in terms of performance outcomes

with probable consequences. Gagne's (1965) statement seems most relevant:

> Knowing a set of strategies is not all that is required for thinking; it is not even a substantial part of what is needed. To be an effective problem solver, the individual must have acquired masses of structurally organized knowledge. Such a knowledge is made up of content principles not heuristic ones.

Once alternative strategies have been proposed, the selecting of the operational strategy must be made in terms of its 1) effectiveness, 2) its feasibility, and 3) its acceptability. At this juncture a decisive checkpoint serves to assess the feasability or either continuance or termination.

Implementation

Implementation options would be left to each subcommittee, providing them the freedom necessary to facilitate the achievement of desired performance outputs. Each subcommittee would submit to a product checkpoint whereby the performance objective would be met in terms of a defined quantitative product.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of outputs must be determined. Such determinations could readily be made by environmental judges who would appraise outputs in terms of their preception of benefits. Judicious decisions would be based upon a consensus using such a technique as Leik's Consensus Scale. (in terms of environmental values and expectations.)

A BEHAVIOR MODEL FOR OPERATIONALIZING PROBLEM SOLVING

I. Problem Delineation (Total group phase) Initiation Data_____

A. Enumeration of problems

B. Match of expertise with problems

C. Assign task (No more than three per subcommittee) (subgroup/director)

II. Problem Assessment (Subgroup/director) Time Constraint_____

A. State the problem (Describe it in the operational context in which it must be solved)

B. Review steps already taken in terms of past action and past results

C. Identify the constraints/variables (legal, financial, time, spatial, etc.)

D. Specify the uncontrolled variables

E. Describe alternative strategies and/or methods of action in terms of a behavioral strategy with probable consequences

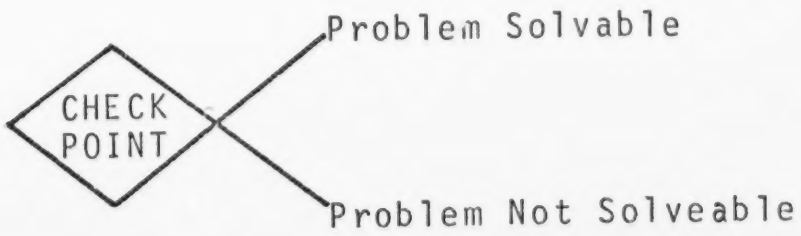
F. Select behavioral strategy

1. Perform effectiveness rating (in terms of solving the problem)

2. Perform feasibility rating (Is strategy feasible in terms of resources, probability, etc.?)

3. Perform acceptability rating (Is strategy acceptance to community, staff, students, etc.?)

G. Establish strategy consensus, e.g., Leik's Measure of Consensus.



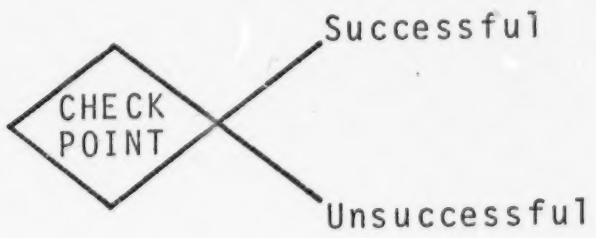
III. Implementation (subgroup) Time Constraint _____

A. Specify outcome quantitatively (what is the expected outcome?)

B. Specify success criterion (acceptable evidence that need has been satisfied and/or problem solved)

C. Implement strategy-- Do It

D. Present evidence of success criterion

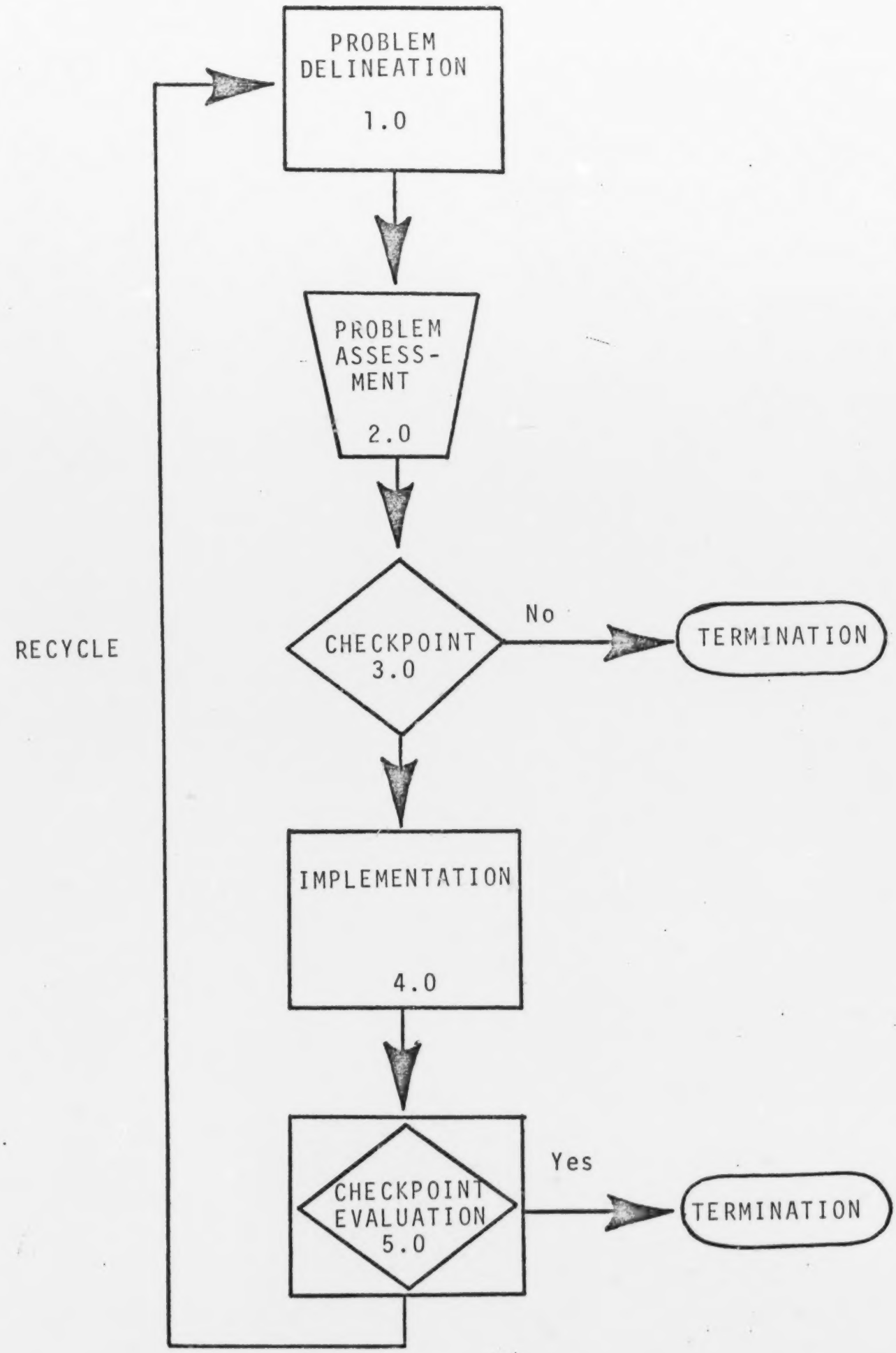


IV. Evaluation (subgroup/director)

A. Assess in terms of achieving successful criterion

B. Disseminate output

There you have it--a management system utilizing basic, common sense and pooling expertise toward effectualizing outcomes. Rather than talking around and about the problem, the plan attacks folklore with fact--delirium with data.


PROBLEM DELINEATION
1.0
PROBLEM ASSESS-MENT
2.0
CHECKPOINT
3.0
No
TERMINATION
RECYCLE
IMPLEMENTATION
4.0
CHECKPOINT EVALUATION
5.0
Yes
TERMINATION

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